DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 062 621 AC 012 591

AUTHOR Grimes, Don M.
TITLE Adult Education and the Employability Training Philosophy.
INSTITUTION California State Dept. of Education, Sacramento. Bureau of Adult Education.
PUB DATE Feb 72
NOTE 7p.; Paper presented at the State Meeting of California Adult Educators Operating Work Incentive Training (WIN) Programs (Los Angeles, Calif., Feb. 22-23, 1972)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Adult Basic Education; *Adult Education; Decision Making; *Disadvantaged Groups; *Educational Philosophy; *Job Training; Motivation; Problem Solving; Teacher Role; Vocational Education

ABSTRACT

The question of how to educate the disadvantaged and with what subject matter is discussed. It is pointed out that two policy decisions by the California State Department of Human Resources Development indicate that this matter is of concern and relevant decisions have been made concerning it. General types of projects which have existed in the Work Incentive (WIN) Program are listed and analyzed according to advantages and disadvantages. These types include: pre-requisite program, parallel, concurrent, or coupled programs. It is proposed that a program be initiated in which the student enters directly into vocational training, and the basic education skills deficiencies are identified by the vocational teacher and are then remedied. It is concluded that the use of successful programs must be undertaken if the problem of the disadvantaged is to be overcome. (Author/CK)

AC012391
Jun 72

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED 062 621

"ADULT EDUCATION AND THE EMPLOYABILITY TRAINING PHILOSOPHY"

Don M. Grimes

A Presentation before the State Meeting of California Adult Educators Operating Work Incentive Training (WIN) Programs, Los Angeles, California, Feb. 22-23, 1972

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY

California State Department of Education, Wilson Riles, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Sacramento, 1972

AC 012 591

ADULT EDUCATION AND THE EMPLOYABILITY TRAINING PHILOSOPHY

Don M. Grimes, WIN Coordinator
Bureau of Adult Education
California State Department of Education

"The success of education as the chief mobility device for so many of us has linked 'making it' much too closely to the symbols and forms of academic education. Now dysfunctional attitudes lead to general denigration of all vocational education through society, and even in adult education."[1]

My remarks today can aptly be prefaced by the following quotation from the Indian Journal of Adult Education by Don F. Seasman:

"Educating the disadvantaged has become an important social issue in recent years. However, the main concern is no longer that of whether or not to educate. Research indicates that most citizens are accepting the fact that it should and must be done. The dilemma has been created by the dissension among various individuals as to what this 'education' shall consist of and how it will be accomplished.

"In one camp are those who are mainly concerned with providing the disadvantaged adult with the kind of training through which he can acquire a vocational skill in order to secure gainful employment. This group is somewhat aware that basic skills in reading, writing, and computation are needed in order to develop vocational competency, but they advocate that these basic skills should be acquired within the context of vocationally-related experiences...

"...On the other side are those who feel that the educationally disadvantaged adult should acquire learning in the form of knowledge and skills which will enable him to improve his life at home, during work, and in the community. In essence the student should be taught to utilize his new learning in a variety of situations. This emphasis transcends the idea of training...and the concern becomes one of education, of helping the student to acquire a new kind of relationship for himself and those around him.

"Training can usually be provided more quickly with more immediate results. Education, while requiring more time and effort, also requires more money to plan, develop, and implement programs to provide learning experiences related to the personal or social needs and goals of the educationally disadvantaged adult.

"Which path to follow? That which is less costly and offers somewhat more immediate results? Or that which is more expensive

---

[1] DeCrow, Roger; "Adult Education in the Private Vocational Schools;" Continuing Education For Adults, ERIC/AE; Bulletin No. 151.

but provides results which are long-lasting? This is the dilemma educators are facing today, and this dilemma must be resolved as soon as possible if we are to provide effective learning experiences for the millions of educationally disadvantaged adults in this country. To this end, intelligent decisions are needed and needed now."[1]

Two policy decisions by the California State Department of Human Resources Development during the past year have indicated clearly that such decisions have been made concerning the Work Incentive Program (WIN). In directives to their field offices, a two-year time limitation was placed on all enrollees in the program. This time limitation includes orientation, counseling, education and training and up to six months of follow-up time after placement on a job. Less than 18 months of time, therefore, is available for the education-training component of the employability plan. Later, instructions were issued to request basic education training concurrently with vocational training. It was immediately apparent to educators who provide the training in the public schools that a decision had been made that would affect all subsequent program planning.

It should not be difficult for public school adult educators to provide contract services for the disadvantaged based on this training philosophy. John Gardner has stated that "every form of education for socially useful purposes has its own kind of excellence, worthy of respect."[2] It is not unreasonable to expect adult educators to emphasize vocational training and de-emphasize cultural education for the purpose of manpower training programs.

The broader concept of cultural education, in use in the WIN program since its inception in California three and one-half years ago, has not satisfied the dominant need of job acquisition or of long-term personal development. This statement is supported by the dropout rate of about 50 percent experienced in traditional basic education classes throughout California in the first two years of the program. No program with low holding power can contribute to the success of the WIN program. The high dropout rate has generally been attributed to low motivation of students in classes where they have difficulty recognizing the relevance of academic learning to job performance. In contrast, the dropout rate for vocational training classes was considerably lower.

Experience in Job Corps, Manpower Development and Training programs, and a variety of other manpower projects undertaken by educators has provided the foundation on which we must build this newest manpower endeavor. One Department of Labor evaluation report states:

> "The instructors themselves thought that the time allotted to basic reading, writing, and communication skills (four hours per day) was excessive; it strained the ability of the trainee to concentrate. This brings up the question of whether or not basic education should

---

[1] Seasman, Don F.; "A Dilemma: Education or Training?" Indian Journal of Education; December, 1970, p. 6.

[2] Op. Cit., p. 54, Quoted by DeCrow.

be integrated with vocational training rather than precede it, thus resulting in the division of the whole program into two separate blocks. Certainly a mixed program would provide more variety in the course of an eight-hour day. It would also have the advantage of preserving integration between the subject matter taught in basic education and the vocational course the trainee is taking."[1]

Let us analyze the general types of projects which have existed in the WIN program in terms of advantages and disadvantages.

PRE-REQUISITE PROGRAM:

We have generally followed a type of program which we may call a "pre-requisite" program and in which basic education is a pre-requisite for vocational training. Students are required to reach certain levels of competency in reading, arithmetic (and perhaps other areas of learning) before they may enter the "pearly gates" of vocational training. Advantages of this type of program are:

(1) Assurance of complete coverage in basic skills to a predetermined level.
(2) Opportunity to group-pace instruction for teacher convenience.
(3) Elimination of skill deficiency problems before entry into vocational training.
(4) Preparation for higher level technical courses such as licensed vocational nurse, etc.

Disadvantages of this type of program are:

(1) Loss of motivation in the initial stages of the educational process (usually a six-hour day of basic education).
(2) High dropout rate as a result of loss of motivation.
(3) Inability of the student to see clearly the relevancy of basic education objectives to vocational training and job performance.
(4) Overlearning which occurs when teachers are free to wander from vocational objectives to broader educational objectives. This overlearning slows the process of training toward employment and further reduces student motivation.

PARALLEL, CONCURRENT, OR COUPLED PROGRAMS:

In an effort to break up the day and to demonstrate some relevance of the academic learning to the vocational training, some institutions have

---

[1] Tuskegee Institute; Demonstrational Features of the Tuskegee Institute Retraining Project; V. I & II; Sept. 1, 1965

organized their projects into a half day of basic education and a half day of vocational training. This is the most common attempt at integration and is the system under which the writer taught for some months in Job Corps. Advantages of this type of program are:

(1) The day is broken up, and the variety of activities tends to foster interest on the part of the learner.
(2) Provides "hands-on" approach in which students begin immediately to work with their hands in the vocational area. (Teachers who have taught in this system report marked increase in student motivation.)

Disadvantages of this type of program are:

(1) The basic education portion of the training usually remains as unrelated to the vocational objectives as in the pre-requisite system. One basic education teacher may be teaching as many as 25 students whose vocational goals vary widely. Under these conditions it is impossible to relate the basic education to vocational objectives in a personalized manner for each student, even with the array of individualized materials available today.
(2) Two unintegrated sets of objectives are operating simultaneously, and the student fails to see any useful relationship between them.
(3) The tendency of basic education teachers to wander into cultural education is not inhibited by this system.
(4) There is a lack of motivation for one-half day rather than for the entire day as in the pre-requisite system.

PROPOSAL FOR INTEGRATED BASIC EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING INTO EMPLOYABILITY TRAINING:

Let us propose a program which is now being tried in several places in California. We suggest a program in which the student enters directly into vocational training, and the basic education skills deficiencies are identified by the vocational teacher or in concert with the basic education specialist. When deficiencies have been identified, the student is referred to the basic education specialist who prescribes skills training to eradicate the deficiencies and nothing more.

Three basic organizational plans are being tried currently: (1) basic education teachers tutoring students to solve problems encountered in the vocational training; (2) teaching teams that include the vocational instructor and the basic education instructor; (3) laboratories to which vocational teachers may refer students and which are staffed with basic education teachers

who use the diagnostic-prescriptive approach toward elimination of specific basic education deficiencies. Whichever organizational plan, these programs have two common characteristics: (1) they are individualized, and (2) they relate directly to the vocational objective (the idea of grade level equivalents to measure student progress is rejected as unsuitable in these plans).

Advantages of this type of program are:

(1) Complete integration of basic skills training into the vocational training objective.
(2) "Hands-on" approach, so necessary for maintaining motivation.
(3) High correlation of teacher efforts.
(4) Elimination of overlearning.
(5) More rapid movement through the program and attainment of vocational objectives.
(6) Greatly increased motivation of students.

Disadvantages of this type of program are:

(1) The concept is relatively new to adult education in California, and it is still in the experimental stage.
(2) It is difficult to find facilities which are appropriate for the plan.
(3) Many teachers need in-service training in techniques for achieving the high degree of teamwork that is necessary for the success of the plan.
(4) Although the total employability training time is shortened, the time in vocational training is lengthened, and great demands are made on teachers in terms of patience, coordination, and individualization of instruction.

TEACHERS AND JOB PLACEMENT:

In considering an employability program, school people cannot disassociate themselves from the task of finding jobs. WIN teams have the primary responsibility for job placement and follow-up, and one of their most valualbe resources is often a successful teacher from industry. Wise administrators are hiring journeymen, artisans, and technicians who know current trends in industry, have status among their peers, and take great personal pride in the quality and capabilities of their graduates. Their schools are reaping a rich harvest of job placements, and some have even placed employers on waiting lists for their qualified graduates.

It is not necessary to fund teachers to "hustle" jobs. They are hired to teach; however, if teachers with the above characteristics are hired, employment potential becomes a plus in the program and supplies valuable assistance to the WIN teams.

CONCLUSION:

The question has been asked, "What will be our stake as public school adult educators in future manpower programs?" I should like to speculate:

In a time when the federal government is reforming welfare, mandating work training for the able-bodied, and searching for programs that work, we can assure a stake in the future by providing efficient programs based on the training philosophy that results in jobs in a relatively short time. We must eliminate low-yield, overlearning programs and proliferate faster-moving training programs which produce invulnerable results--jobs! Successful programs do exist; their proliferation is possible and essential.

We must demonstrate that we are not dedicated to "making it" through education that is closely linked to the "symbols and forms of academic education." We must demonstrate our capability for providing upward mobility for the disadvantaged through employability training.

ERIC Clearinghouse
JUN 6 1972
on Adult Education